

DATE

1 Feb 88

TRANSMITTAL SLIP

TO:

NESA/AI

ROOM NO.

BUILDING

REMARKS:

CH-refile please

FROM:

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ROOM NO.  
6G00

BUILDING  
Hqs

EXTENSION

25X1

FORM NO.

REPLACES FORM 36-A

(47)

## Talking Points for ADDO's HPSCI Briefing

2 February 1988

## Unrest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

The eight-weeks of violence in the West Bank and Gaza--touched off by an ordinary traffic accident in early December--has surprised most observers by its duration and intensity.

--The unrest was fueled by the Palestinians' frustration with the Israeli occupation and hopelessness about prospects for the future. The US-Soviet summit and the Arab League meeting in Amman last November--neither of which addressed the Palestinian issue in detail--reinforced the Palestinians' perception of the world's indifference to their plight.

--This climate allowed rumors about the traffic accident in which an Israeli truck driver caused the deaths of four Gazans to be distorted into allegations that it was a deliberate attack against Palestinians by Israelis. [REDACTED]

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The intensity of the unrest has varied since its outbreak on 9 December.

--Violent demonstrations occurred daily for the first two weeks--resulting in 21 Palestinian deaths--but subsided just before Christmas.

--The second wave of protests, in which 18 more Palestinians died, followed the deportations of four Palestinians to Lebanon in early January. These more intense and wide-spread disturbances were aggravated by Israel's strategy of beating demonstrators. [REDACTED]

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A third cycle of violence may be underway now as scattered protests flared up in Gaza over the weekend, shattering the relative calm of the previous week. Two Palestinians were killed Monday as sporadic disturbances continued in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

--An Israeli settler was seriously wounded when his car was firebombed near Ram Allah in the West Bank. [REDACTED]

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### New Palestinian Leaders Emerging

The militant students, Muslim fundamentalists, and street gangs at the forefront of the protests have pushed traditional Palestinian leaders--mayors, clan chiefs, and local PLO stalwarts--into the background and may give rise to new groups of local leaders.

- The PLO has tried to exploit the unrest and still is the single strongest focus of political allegiances in the occupied territories; but West Bankers and Gazans appear to be frustrated with the exiled PLO leadership, which they see as neither responsive to nor representative of their needs and aspirations.

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Fundamentalists have been the prime force behind demonstrations and other protest activities in Gaza.

- The most prominent fundamentalist leader is Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, who heads the Mujama', an organization associated with the Muslim Brotherhood that is very popular with university students and that has not advocated anti-Israeli violence.
- The more radical Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which is not related to Shia extremists in Lebanon, has been active organizing demonstrations and also has apparently tried to kill Israeli soldiers and civilians in Gaza.

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### The Impact in Israel

The Palestinian disturbances have not prompted many Israelis to reassess the urgency of moving on the peace process in order to address underlying Palestinian grievances.

- Israeli hardliners associated with Prime Minister Shamir's Likud and other right-wing parties point to the Palestinian violence as evidence of the intolerable security threat Israel would face were it to withdraw from the territories.
- For Labor and supporters of territorial compromise, the violence highlights the demographic problem Israel faces if it does not disengage from the territories, but territorial compromise is seen by Labor Party chief Peres as a negative political issue in an election year and in the absence of a viable peace process.

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The Israeli Army is sharply divided over the effectiveness of beatings to control Palestinian demonstrations.

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[REDACTED]

--Commanders in the northern West Bank reportedly believe the protests have gained too much momentum for harsh tactics to be effective and that Israel should adopt nonviolent measures, such as demanding immediate collection of unpaid taxes unless Palestinian merchants agree to end their strikes and promise to stop the street violence.

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Outlook

The unrest in the occupied territories will not dissipate in the nearterm as long as underlying Palestinian grievances are not addressed.

- The intensity of the violence will continue to vary, and we expect the periods of relative calm to become more brief.
- There is evidence of limited attempts to organize ongoing protests at neighborhood levels, which will help to fuel future demonstrations. [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Unrest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

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